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S E R M O N

OCCASIONED by the

D E A T H

Of the Late REVEREND

Mr. Thomas Nevin,

PREACHED AT

DOWNPATRICK,

The Twenty Fourth of March, 1744.

By ALEXANDER COLVILL, A. M. & M. D.

B E L F A S T:

Printed by JAMES MAGEE, M,DCC,XLV. *may*

S E R M O N

D E I I

Mr. Thomas Vernon

TO THE
CONGREGATION
OF
Protestant DISSENTERS
IN
DOWNPATRICK.

Gentlemen,

MY consenting to make the following Discourse public, in Compliance with your unanimous and earnest Request, notwithstanding the Hurry and other Disadvantages under which it was composed, is a convincing Proof of my Readiness to sacrifice any little Reputation I might hope for, as a Preacher, to the doing you a Pleasure. I am fully satisfied what it was that chiefly prevailed upon you to make me this Request; namely, the setting that truly great Man's Character in a proper Light, and vindicating him from these ignorant or malicious

Aspersions to which Men of eminent Usefulness and great Worth have ever been exposed. All that I have to ask in return for my Complaining, is that you would continue to value his Memory, to imitate his Virtues, and to profit by his Instructions; and that you would be pleased to meditate seriously upon the great and important Truths treated of in the following Discourse, notwithstanding the plain and familiar Dress in which they are represented. By your doing so I shall learn to bear, if not ~~to~~ despise, the Censures of those who can be pleased with nothing but what is wrote with Taste and Politeness, and shall have no Reason to repent that I gave you this Testimony of being Gentlemen,

Your affectionate Friend,

and humble Servant

Alexander Colvill.

A

SERMON, &c.

2 TIMOTHY IV. 7, 8.

*I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course,
I have kept the Faith: henceforth there is laid up
for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the
Righteous Judge shall give me in that Day: and not
to me only, but unto all them also that love his ap-
pearing.*

IN the preceding part of this Chapter St. Paul gives a most solemn Charge to Timothy to do the Work of an Evangelist, and make full Proof of his Ministry, as he would hope for a favourable Sentence at the Tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ; and farther suggests that *e're long Men would not endure sound Doctrine*, nor would Timothy in time to come have the Advantage of this Apostle's Example and Instructions to excite him to Zeal and Diligence in discharging the Duties of his Office; for, says he, *I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my Departure is at hand*. And in the Words of the Text he acquaints him that the Reflection
upon

upon a Life spent in the Study and Practice of Virtue and true Religion, and in recommending and enforcing it upon the Hearts and Lives of others, notwithstanding the Opposition and Discouragements he met with in so good a Work, was that which both supported him under the View of his approaching Dissolution, and filled his Soul with the most glorious Hopes, and joyful Expectations, of being approved and rewarded by his righteous Judge, *in that Day*. Thus we may see the View the Apostle had in the Words of my Text, and their Connection with the preceding Verses; and they contain,

FIRST, A Description of a worthy Disciple and Minister of Jesus, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith.*

SECONDLY, The glorious Reward which such as act their Part well, have the best grounded Expectations of, *henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge, will give me at that Day, and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Tho' 'tis extremely probable that in the first Clause St. Paul has a particular Regard to the Difficulties which he had to encounter as an Apostle, and the noble Efforts he made for the Establishment of Christianity, and *that Liberty wherewith Christ has made us Christians free*, yet as he asserts that *the Lord the righteous Judge will give that Crown of Righteousness to all who after his Example should fight the good Fight, and finish their Course*, or, in other Words, *who love Christ's appearing*; and, as I apprehend, it may better suite the present Occasion, and be of more general Use,

to consider this great Apostle rather as an Example of Christians and Christian Ministers, than as an Apostle extraordinarily assisted and supported, in which Light he is a fitter Object of our Admiration than of our Imitation, I shall in the following Discourse confine my self to this latter Sense which the Words, I think, are also intended to convey unto us.

Whoever will be at Pains to compare these Words with what the same Apostle says to the *Corinthians*, in his first Epistle ix Chap. from the 24th Verse, will clearly see that in explaining the Duties and Rewards of the Disciples of *Jesus*, he uses a Metaphor taken from the Olympic Games, so highly celebrated in that Age and Part of the World; to be Victors in which the several Candidates contended with great Earnestness, for a Crown that quickly faded; and that notwithstanding there were many and great Severities to be submitted to, to fit and qualify Men for these Exercises; and, after all, such vast Hazard and Uncertainty in their coming off Conquerors in the End. From hence he argues how much more becoming us, and worth our while, it must be to exercise an holy Discipline and Severity upon our selves in order to our having Success in our Christian Course and Warfare, where the Prize we contend for is a righteous and incorruptible Crown, and may be obtained by every Candidate that exerts himself with Self-denial, Zeal, and Perseverance.

If you will a little more particularly consider these figurative Expressions, I persuade my self you will find them very properly chosen to set forth the Duty of the Disciples of *Jesus*, and the Terms upon the Performance whereof their hopes of being accepted and rewarded at the great Day do solely depend.

And

And first he says, *I have fought the good Fight.* Any one who considers human Nature, and the Circumstances and Condition of our Being, will clearly see that we are put into a state of Discipline, that by acquiring Knowledge and Virtue we may raise our Natures to the highest Dignity and Happiness of which they are capable, and, that in order to this, God has most wisely endued us, not only with the Powers of Reason and Understanding to distinguish between Good and Evil, and of good Affections and Conscience to applaud or reprove us according as we behave well or ill; but has also implanted in our Natures lower Appetites and Passions, necessary indeed for us in this imperfect State and beginning of Existence, as an exercise of Virtue, and a trial of our Obedience to the Laws of God, written in our Hearts, and revealed in his Word. These Appetites and Passions *are not Consequences of our first Parents Sin*, as unthinking Men have sometimes fondly imagined, *nor absolutely evil in themselves*; but original Parts of our Frame, all calculated either for our own Preservation, or the Continuation of our Race in the World. They were part of the Nature of the first Man before he transgressed, and most of them are taken notice of, as being frequently exerted by the Son of God himself when tabernacled among us. However, it must be acknowledged that the Extravagance of unbridled Appetite and Passion is Sin; the Order and Beauty of the Human Frame is hereby subverted, and of consequence a Foundation is laid for the Accusations of Conscience, and the most bitter Pangs of Remorse. As by being Creatures sensible of Pleasure and Pain, we must necessarily desire and pursue whatever we find ministers to our Satisfaction

tion; so by the joint Powers of Reason and Reflection we are taught and disposed to stop our selves short in these Pursuits, in which we cannot innocently indulge. These two Principles of Action, according as they are attended to and obeyed, characterize the Man. Whilst we gratify our natural Appetites and Passions so far only as our Reason directs, and our reflecting Powers approve, and as the Law of God allows, without breaking in upon the Interests and Rights of others, or injuring, or at least rendring doubtful and precarious, our own more important Interests, we are innocent. But if at all adventures we blindly and impetuously pursue whatever for the present appears agreeable, without regard to the Natures and Consequences of Things, neglecting to listen to the higher and commanding Powers of our Minds, or to grow wiser by our Experience and the former Rebukes of Conscience; in this case we become guilty to our selves, and to all other Minds formed, as we are, in the Image of God. Our Passions and Appetites, as I have said, are natural to us, are a part of the Divine Workmanship, and so necessary for us in this state of Discipline, that to want any of them, or to have them in too small and disproportionate a Degree, would be our Blemish, Imperfection and Loss. However, it must be admitted, on the other hand, that some of them, perhaps by the very Temperament of the Body, may be stronger in us than others are; these thro' bad Example and a careless and unhappy Education, in that time of Life when Reason is either none at all, or very imperfect, become so violent, and lay the Foundation of such strong Habits as are not easily mastered; and will afford matter of Trial and Exercise to good Men all their Days.

These disproportionate Appetites and Passions, like a monstrous Feature in a fine Picture, spoil the beautiful and harmonious Form of human Nature, so that we lose that Pleasure in contemplating it that otherwise must necessarily arise in our Minds. And this State in Scripture Stile is represented by the Figures of *Body and Spirit, the natural and the spiritual Man, the Law in our Members warring against the Law in our Minds, leading us into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death.* Our Duty, Interest, and Happiness must lye in making head against, bearing down and overcoming the Extravagance of these Passions and Appetites, and in listening to our Reason, Conscience, and good Affections; by this means throwing off the Yoke and Dominion of Sin, that we may no longer serve it, and attaining to the Liberty of the Sons of God, a Liberty of acting as our best and noblest Powers direct and approve, and which Experience tells us will best promote our own and others present and future Happiness, without these allays of Shame and Remorse with which criminal Satisfactions are attended. It is from this just View of human Nature that the sacred Scriptures represent us as under an indispensible Obligation to maintain a continual warfare with impetuous Lusts and Passions; for Reason and good Affections must either subdue them and bring them under, or be overcome by them. This is the Meaning of these Directions, that Christians must *mortify the old Man with his Deeds, and crucify the Flesh with the Lusts and Affections thereof, must fight the good Fight of Faith* till we overcome. And the Means and Instruments of Religion are mercifully and wisely chosen and appointed of God to assist us in this holy Warfare, such as a firm Belief of the Being and glorious

rious Perfections of the Deity, the Holiness, Benevolence and Compassion of his Nature, evident in all his Works, but chiefly in his Dispensation of Grace to the World by his Son Jesus Christ; the Doctrine, Promises, and Threatnings of the Gospel; the Example, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Son of God, who *brought Life and Immortality to Light*; all conspire to excite and assist us in this good Work of subduing an extravagant and thoughtless Love of present bodily and sensual Pleasure; and therefore this is called the *Fight of Faith*, and our *Victory over the World is even thro' our Faith*. Thus Moses by looking at (that is considering) *him who is invisible, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and chose rather to suffer Afflictions with the People of God than enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season*. Holy Men of old not only despised Pleasures, when they could not be enjoy'd without making shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, but submitted to the most cruel Pains of which our Natures have the greatest Abhorrence: *They were tortured not accepting Deliverance that they might obtain a better Resurrection; had Trials of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, of Bonds and Imprisonments; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword; and thro' their Faith they subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained the Promises, stoped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of the Fire, escaped the Edge of the Sword*. And our Blessed Lord by his great Self-denial, and Submission to the good Pleasure of his Heavenly Father, made it yet more indispensibly the Duty of his Disciples to learn of *him who was meek and lowly, and to deny themselves, taking up their Cross and following, or imitating, him*.

Thus you see what Enemy we are to combat with, and by what Weapon we may hope to overcome, *even our Faith*. 'Tis true Satan and the World are sometimes represented in Scripture as Enemies against whom we ought to stand upon our guard; yet it is evident that they could not hurt us but by means of these Appetites, Passions, and Lusts; the things that are in the World *are the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*; and where a Person hath attained to great Self-government, and strength of Faith, Satan's Temptations will be easily baffled, and his *fiery Darts quenched*. I might farther observe to you that this Similitude of Christians being in a war-faring State serves to teach us that we ought to maintain a constant Watchfulness over our selves, lest we be surprized into Faults; the rather because the Enemy is as it were within our very Walls: *What I say unto you* (says our Lord to his Apostles) *I say unto all, watch. And watch and pray that ye enter not into Temptations, for tho' the Spirit indeed be willing yet the Flesh is weak*. Violent Transports of Passion, or sudden gusts of Lust, may otherwise shipwreck our Souls, and we perish without Remedy. Moreover if we are *fighting the good Fight of Faith* let us arm our selves with the most resolute Fortitude, and steady Constancy; and in order to this let us consider under what Leader we are to combat; with what Arms and Assistances; in what Cause; encompassed about with what Witnesses; and for what Glory and Reward. What Shame and Disgrace would it be to us, should we fear or give up, when we fight under *the Captain of our Salvation*; who, by a just Self-government, hath already overcome the World, and baffled all the Assaults of Satan; and by

by his Doctrine, Example, and promised Aids, has furnished us with the most glorious Assistances, Encouragements, and Hopes? Are we not called upon to *put on the whole Armour of God, that we may withstand in the Evil Day, and having done all may stand?* Have we not the *Helmet of Salvation, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Shield of Faith whereby we may quench the fiery Darts of the wicked One, the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, and our Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace?* How glorious is the Cause we are called to contend in? Nothing less than the keeping Reason and Conscience on the Throne, acquiring virtuous Dispositions, cherishing good Affections, and bearing down bad ones, raising our Natures to the highest Excellency of which they are capable, by imitating the greatest and best of Beings; and thus making our selves meet for a Glory and Felicity with the blessed above, *such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man at any time to conceive.* And is not this a conflict in which many before us have successfully engaged? The Prophets and Apostles, the noble Army of Confessors and Martyrs, and a vast number of Christians, who had no such extraordinary Assistances and Attainments have stood the Shock of the Enemies we have to encounter, and have come off with Honour and Success. And tho' the Difficulties with which Virtue and Religion are attended, in this Metaphor are evidently supposed, a warfaring State being necessarily attended with many Perils and Toils, yet when we call to mind that our ALL is at Stake, not the vain Punctilios of Honour, not the grasping a wide Dominion, or the amassing Riches *that take to themselves Wings and fly away,* but

but the ennobling our Natures, treasuring up eternal Peace in our own Breasts, from a Conscience that we have been faithful Servants of God, and Disciples of Jesus, and have done well; securing to our selves the Favour of the greatest and best of Beings, in whose Favour there is Life, and in being fitted for the Society, Services, and Glory of the blessed above. I say when we labour and look for such Things as these, can we hesitate one Moment whether all the Hardships, Perils, Labours, and Sufferings of our militant State *be worthy to be metioned or at all compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us?*

The Apostle doth also compare the discharging the Duties of a Christian, and Christian Minister, unto a *Race*, another of these Exercises performed in the Olympic Games. *I have finished my Course*, says he. Now in whatever way we suppose these Races were run, the Persons that entred the Lists were at great pains before hand to qualify themselves for acting their Parts with Honour, and obtaining the Prize; they were obliged, if they hoped to have the Crown adjudged to them, to comply with and conform themselves unto the Laws of the Course, and with much Toil, Sweat, and Perseverance, to endeavour to outstrip their Competitors, without giving up or slackening their Pace till got to the Goal. Thus are we evidently admonished, by the due and diligent use of the instrumental Parts of Religion, to get the better of our Proneness, to vain transitory and sinful Pleasures, such as Self-Reflection, Prayer, the reading and hearing of the Word of God, partaking of the holy Sacrament, frequent and serious Resolutions against sinful Indulgences, and a constant Watch
over

over our Hearts, and the very Tendencies and Propensities of our Souls ; keeping at a Distance from all manner of *Evil and the Appearances of it*, and especially those *Sins which do most easily beset us*, to which we are most exposed, and by which we have been most frequently overcome ; and also by a careful and regular Discharge of all the Duties of Piety, Righteousness, Sincerity, Charity, Mortification, and Self-denial, to acquire such strong and settled Habits of Virtue, as that the empty Vanities and sensual Gratifications of this World should be of no Force to prevail with us either to give up and slacken our Pace (by which means we should forfeit all our former Hopes, and lose the Advantage of our first Labours) or, what is still worse, divert us from those Paths which the giver of the Prize and Judge of the Course has prescribed to all such as would hope for the Crown. That this is the true Sense and Intention of the Apostle is evident from paralel Passages, 1 Cor. ix. 24. *Know ye not that they who run in a Race run all, but one obtaineth the Prize? so run that ye may obtain; and every Man that striveth for the Mastery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run not as uncertainly——But I keep my Body under, and bring it into Subjection, lest that by any Means when I have preached the Gospel unto others I my self should be a cast away, that is disapproved by the giver of the Prize. And Heb. xii. 1. Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight and the Sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith.*

Thus

Thus have I attempted to shew what is contained in the first Part of the Text, namely the Description of a Christian, and a Minister of Jesus. In the latter Part of it we have an account of the Prize for which they contend and run. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me in that Day, and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing.* This Reward is called a *Crown*, either to keep up to the Allusion of a Crown or Chaplet of Flowers, which was all the Prize contended for by the Candidates in the Olympic Games, or else to express that Glory, Joy and Triumph with which our future Happiness shall be attended. The giver of the Crown is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is generally, if not always, meant by the Title **LORD** when it stands alone in the New Testament and without any other Epithet; but in this Case it will admit of no Doubt, because *we know assuredly that his Father hath made him both Lord and Christ. That the Father himself, or in his own Person, will judge no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son, at whose Tribunal we must all stand, for he has received Authority to execute Judgment because he is the Son of Man. And as a Reward for his suffering of Death he is cloathed with this Glory and Honour, that——Every Tongue should confess him to be LORD to the Glory of the Father.* The Crown is called a *Crown of Righteousness* because it is conferred in consequence of the free Promise of a righteous God, who therefore from the Truth and Righteousness of his Nature will not suffer such as trusted in him to be ashamed of their Confidence. And also because it is the Reward of a holy and righteous Temper and Behaviour, which though not merited by us, will be given in proportion

portion to the Improvement of our Talents and according to our Works; without which Holiness no Man shall see the Lord. And likewise because the Rectitude and Holiness of the Saints in a future State is what most properly should be called their Crown and Reward. And that we might be assured this high Reward is not confined to Men of such distinguished Grace and Usefulness as *St. Paul*, he adds, that it will be given *not to him only but to all those also that love the appearing of this righteous Lord*; that is, to every sincere good Christian, who lives as these ought to do, who know they are to answer for the Temper of their Minds, and the Conduct of their Lives, before a holy, righteous, and impartial Judge, and earnestly long for that happy State where Sin and Temptation shall be no more, where Virtue shall be perfected, and Eternity spent in a delightful Sense of God's Favour, the Society of blessed Spirits, and in grateful *Halleluiahs unto him that sits on the Throne and unto his Lamb.* This Glory and Felicity is well secured *being hid with Christ in God*, and laid up in Heaven for the Saints. But though those that die in the Lord, immediately enter into a State of much greater Happiness than this World will admit of, and therefore may in a comparative Sense be said *to go to Christ* which is best of all, yet our full Reward will not be given till *that Day*, that great Day of Christ's solemn appearing to Judgment. The Crown is now laid up, and shall be then given. A State of Discipline and Purgation after this Life is a Doctrine very gainful to the Clergy of the Romish Church (if indeed we ought to call these great Corrupters of Christianity a Christian Church) but void of all Support from Scripture and Reason, *St. Paul's wish that he might depart and*

go to Christ which was best of all, as well as the Promise made to the *penitent Thief*, and the Parable of the *rich Man and the Lazar*, are quite opposite to the Fancy of the Sleep of the Soul in the intermediate State. Good and bad Men most certainly carry Consciousness with them to the invisible World; and, if they do, must be very considerably happy, or miserable, as well by reason of their present Feelings, as from a more clear and certain View of the awful and important Issues of Things; but that their Happiness and Misery till the Day of Judgment is incomplete, the New Testament frequently and clearly asserts.

This Subject is most fruitful of good Instructions; some of them have been already hinted at, and I must bespeak your Patience till I just name a few more that naturally offer themselves to our Thoughts.

First, Has the Apostle represented the future Happiness as a Prize, which they only who overcome and *finish their Course* well, shall obtain? hence we may see the unaccountable Folly of too many, professing themselves Christians, who flatter themselves with vain and delusive Hopes of Happiness upon a quite different Conduct. Will the calling Christ Lord, Lord, professing to be his Disciples, and pretending love to him, and faith in him; will going the round of the instrumental Duties of Religion, when our Appetites and Passions remain still unsubdued, ever intitle us to the Reward of those who overcome? Can a Person's *beginning in the Spirit, if yet he end in the Flesh?* his running well for a while, if he suffers himself to give up or be diverted from the right Path of his Duty, give a wise Man Hopes of obtaining
that

that Crown which is promised to those only that finish their Christian Course? surely no, let us then so run as we may obtain, always remembering that it is by a patient Continuance in well-doing that we must look for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, and attain to eternal Life, and that they only, who are faithful unto the Death, shall obtain the Crown of Life.

2. Do's the Apostle represent the future Happiness of good Men, by the Metaphor of a Crown? We may hence be assured that it must needs be well worth contending for. Can we appear in any other than a most ridiculous Light to superior wise Beings, when they behold us using so much Art and Address, spending so many thoughtful Days and waking Nights, submitting to so great Fatigue, Hazard and Pain, for the acquiring the most empty *Vanities*; and this often at the Expence of the Peace of our own Minds, the Esteem of good Men, the Favour of God, and our own eternal Happiness; whilst that only, which is, in truth, worthy of our greatest Care (the Improvement of our rational and moral Powers, acting well that part for which God gave us these Powers, and sent us into this World, and securing the Favour of God and a happy Eternity) is almost altogether neglected, as tho' it were a mere by-Work, and of little or no Consequence to us? And yet alas! my Brethren, is not this too generally the case? how many are there that spend their Money for that which is not Bread, and their Labour for that which satisfieth not; who sell their Birthright (a Title to the heavenly Inheritance) as it were for a Morsel of Pottage? that

say *who will shew us any Good*, but are little solicitous to have God lift upon them the light of his Countenance, and to grant them his Salvation?

3. If the future Reward is a *Crown of Righteousness* and to be given by *the Lord the Righteous Judge*; then we may rest assured, that none but a good Man can possibly obtain it. By a good Man I mean one who is *personally* and *inwardly* holy, one who, from a Faith in God and Reverence of him, has with Care and Pains cultivated and acquired virtuous and good Dispositions, *has fought the good Fight, and finished his Course*. Whatever has been taught by some for the Religion of Jesus; surely to alledge that Men may be damned for Crimes which they never did commit, nor could possibly help the Commission of; or rewarded for the Holiness and Righteousness which the Judge must perfectly know is not their own; is to assert, almost in plain Terms, that the Lord the Judge is not a *righteous one*, and is utterly inconsistent with the current and tenor of both the Old and new Testament, in which we are so frequently and strongly assured that *Men will be rewarded according to their Works*, and the good or bad Improvement of their Talents. How much is it to be bewailed that so many, under pretence of magnifying the Grace of God to the Elect (by which they too often mean these of their own Party and distinguishing Principles and Modes of Worship) overturn his essential Rectitude, and by this means subvert natural and revealed Religion at once, render it impossible to love, or trust in the righteous Judge, and expose the holy Religion of Jesus to the Jest and Scorn of Unbelievers.

4. Is

4. Is the future Reward a *Crown of Righteousness*? then no good Man can possibly miss of it. 4
 Whoever has a Reverence for God, endeavours to obey the Dictates of Conscience, believes in, and lives under the Influence of such Revelations as the Wisdom of God sees fit to favour him with, cherishes the good Dispositions of Piety, Righteousness, Truth, Charity and Sobriety, and bears down the contrary Dispositions, and resolutely perseveres in such a course, such an one, I say, is the Friend of God, and most undoubtedly will be happy. 'Tis not our being descended of this or the other Stock, nor our being favoured with this or the other external Form of Religion; It is not our joining in religious Communion to this or the other Party of Christians; It is not an high Pretence to Zeal, nor the Knowledge of deep and mysterious Points; It is not a regular and punctual Attendance upon some, nay nor even all, of the instrumental Offices of Religion, that will be a good Plea for Favour at the Tribunal of a just and impartial Judge. Nothing will then stand us instead but what has been done in us and by us, through the gracious Assistances afforded to us, together with the Mercy of God declared in the Gospel, according to which we must then be judged. And whoever has made a good Improvement of the Advantages afforded him by Nature and Grace, has, from a prevailing Regard to God and Virtue, resisted Temptations, subdued corrupt Affections, Lusts and turbulent Passions, and perseveres in this Course to the end, making Allowance for the Frailties and Infirmities inseparable from our present imperfect State, such a one I say *has made his Calling and Election sure; for the righteous God loveth Righteousness*

ousness; his Countenance beholdeth the upright; and what he loves must most certainly be happy; Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the upright in Heart. Such may have Peace in their latter End, and say with the Apostle in my Text, when the time of their Departure is at hand, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the righteous Judge the Lord will give me in that Day, and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing*; I do not harbour Sin nor delight in it after the inward Man, and therefore I know that *nothing shall be able to separate between my Soul and the Love of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

5. Do these Christians, and Christian Ministers, who run with patience the Race set before them, and finish their Course, secure a Title to this Crown of Righteousness? let us from hence be taught rather to imitate their Virtues, and be followers of their Faith, than to sorrow over them as tho' we had no hope. No doubt as Nature requires it, so God will indulge us in a reasonable and just Concern for the removal of those who have been dear to us, and qualified for eminent Usefulness in promoting the Cause of Virtue and Religion in the World: *shall the Righteous perish from off the Earth and there be no Man to lay it to heart?* What a Number of bright Ornaments and able Supporters of Religion, Virtue, and Liberty, has the holy, the wise and ~~religious~~ Lord removed from their Station of Usefulness among us, to receive the Reward of their faithful Services, and to go to Christ which was for them indeed best of all, but for the Churches, as far as we are able to judge, an almost irreparable Loss. And this last Stroke, which cannot but affect

Sigh
tears

fect both you and me in a very sensible Manner, is, I assure you, none of the lightest. I never much affected funeral Panegyricks, because by drawing Characters too perfect we generally give Disgust. It is far from my Intention to represent your late Reverend Pastor free from Failings, or even from Faults; I never knew nor had Reason to believe there was such a Man upon the Earth as *did good without sinning also, the Man Christ Jesus* only excepted. But this I will take upon me to say, and for the Truth of it can appeal to such of you as were happy in the greatest Intimacy with him, that he had as few Faults, and possessed as many Excellencies, and in as high a Degree, as most Men I ever knew. My Intimacy with him for above twenty Years gave me an Opportunity of forming a tolerable Judgment of him; during all which time our Friendship never suffered the least Interruption. His natural Induements were singularly valuable; his Apprehension quick, his Memory extraordinary, and his Judgment sound, so that, when considered in all these respects, he had very few were his Equals. And these natural Abilities he had carefully cultivated by as close an Application to Study, especially in his younger Years, as most Ministers the Dissenters have to boast of. And when his own private Affairs, and his Zeal to serve others, rendered it impossible for him to prosecute his Studies with his wonted Ardor and Assiduity, yet his ardent love of Knowledge always appeared in this, that nothing that was esteemed in the learned World escaped his Observation; nor did he stop at any Expences to purchase such Wisdom; and amidst a hurry of other Business his intimate Friends knew that he always made himself master of such Writings, could weigh

weigh the Strength of their Reasonings, and point out clearly their Weakness and Defects. What he wanted in time his own vast and comprehensive Genius amply made up for, and whilst to a distant Observer he seemed to read nothing, to such as knew him well he appeared master of almost all valuable and useful Knowledge. If a studied Elegance of his public Compositions could not well be always expected from one so much advanced in Years, and so much otherwise employed, it is certain however upon some Occasions he excelled, even taken in this Light. But as his Mind was so amply stored with all the useful Truths of natural and revealed Religion, it was impossible that his most hasty and inaccurate Productions should not always be edifying; and such Strokes of Oratory and good Sense were to be met with in them as must charm and surprize his Hearers of best Taste and Learning. Indeed it is with me somewhat doubtful, whether the most subtle Reasoning, disguised Method, and studied Eloquence, be either most improving or entertaining even to the best Judges in our Congregations. *Faith must come by such a bearing of the Word of God as will at once inform and convince the Judgment, and warm the Heart, and captivate the Affections.* And I cannot think it any want of respect to the bulk of Hearers to suppose that to answer these Ends great Plainness of Speech is necessary; and that *the Words of Mens Wisdom* would oftentimes prove altogether insignificant. By the one Method many gain the Reputation of accurate Preachers, being more admired than understood, but it is to be feared they are generally but *tinkling Cymbals, who preach themselves rather than Christ Jesus the Lord.* However, that I may not be thought to dis-

disparage such elegant and accurate Discourses, rather because they require Genius and Application superior to my own, than for the Reasons already assigned, I shall not take upon me to say more upon this Subject; nor pretend to determine whether it was from Choice, or some times from Necessity, that his Sermons in the latter part of his Life, were not always so exact as the most judicious and critical of his Hearers could have wished; but this I will affirm that all his public Performances were so full of good Sense, judicious Observations, and profitable Instructions, and delivered with such Vivacity and Fervor, that his Taste must have been nice to a great Fault who could not find much more to praise than censure, or who could return from this place without being at once pleased and edified. But tho' I should grant that in regard to his natural and acquired Abilities your late Reverend and Dear Pastor had some Competitors, or even Equals, yet there is one part of his Character with which you must be supposed much better acquainted than I, wherein he stands unrivaled, and in which he shines far above all the Men I ever knew; and that is his unconquerable Love of Justice and of Mankind. To go into a full Induction of the particular Instances of this kind would be as impossible as to use Arguments to prove it would be needless; but I may say *he went about as his Master doing Good*. Did he not serve this way the Stranger equally with the Acquaintance, the Poor as cheerfully as the Rich, and the Enemy as well as the Friend? Can any one pretend to shew that he espoused the rich Man's Cause against the poor Man's, but when Righteousness and Truth obliged him so to do? In doing Good he truly imitated

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His heavenly Father; he was *no Respector of Persons*, but very often served *the evil and unthankful*. I have often known him take part with a Stranger of little Consequence, against the powerful and mighty, for whom he had conceived the greatest Regard; and so remarkable was he in forgiving Injuries that if at any time a Person, who had treated him ill, stood in need of his Counsel and Assistance, he seemed to serve such an one with a more than ordinary Readiness, Alacrity, and Zeal. Was he mercenary? No, he did his good Offices not only *without Money and without Price*, but to the neglect of his family Affairs, and at a considerable Expence. Did he do such Works to be seen of Men? No, his Zeal to maintain Justice, and *the Cause of the Poor which he searched out*, and to oppose all sorts of Oppression and illegal Exactions, were the main, if not the only Reasons that ever he had an Enemy; but he will have *Honour from God* for contemning the Praise of such Men. If he at any time advised to seek out ones just Right by due Course of Law, yet this was not done till the Methods of Peace had been tried in vain, or rejected. And if the *Peace-maker be blessed*, how many Blessings do's his Memory deserve? how many may we hope will be intailed upon his Family and Offspring? And how great must his Reward be from the Prince of Peace, and with the peaceful Society of the Blessed in Heaven? *truely God is not unrighteous to forget his Labour of Love*; and if a Cup of cold Water given to the thirsty will in no wise lose its Reward, may we not, nay are we not constrained to believe, that *there is laid up for him an exceeding great and an eternal Weight of Glory*?

Thus

Thus have I endeavoured to do what Justice I could to the Memory of your late worthy Pastor. Characters so amiable and uncommon ought to *be had in everlasting Remembrance.* And it is our Duty *to mark the perfect and upright Man,* as well to testify our Respect to them, as for our own Advantage. I have this for my Satisfaction that I have not painted above the Life, and I am persuaded you will rather blame me for saying too little, than imagine I have in any thing exceeded the Truth; *out of the Abundance of my own Heart my Mouth has spoken.* I shall only add that his warm Attachment to the Cause of Liberty (*that Liberty wherewith he has made us free*) at a time when it was thought he must have suffered much in his Worldly Circumstances on that account, and when he could not so well as afterwards have born such a Loss, is, in my Apprehension, none of the least of *his* Glories; as, my Brethren, your Steadiness upon that Occasion is highly for *your* Honour. You had too good a Taste, and knew him too well, to lose the Advantage of his Pastoral Labours in Compliance with popular Clamour and Calumny, or the Rage and Bigotry of such as professed themselves to be Ministers of the Meek Jesus. The Loss of a Pastor so accomplished, and of such a Friend, and Fellow-Labourer in the Work of Christ, must needs very deeply affect both you and me. Let us not however forget that our Duty is Submission to the adorable Governor of the Universe, who do's all things, could we but see it, wisely and well; that we must not depend too much upon Means, but look to God *with whom is the residue of the Spirit.* And may our God abundantly supply all *your spiritual Wants in Christ Jesus our Lord;* and
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make you once more happy in an able Minister of the New Testament, that may be an *Helper of your Faith and Joy*. *Be ye Followers of him* and others, in all Goodness, *who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*. 'Tho' he is dead, let the Instructions you have received from him, still live in your Hearts; and rejoice in this, that your Loss is his great Gain; that he is gone to Christ, which is best of all; and *having fought the good Fight, and finished his Course thro' Faith, henceforth is laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness, which the Righteous Judge, the Lord, will give unto him in that Day, and to you and all others that love his appearing.*

F I N I S.

